

Board of Education Agenda Item

Item: _____ L. _____

Date: September 26, 2007

Topic: First Review of Recommendations for Adoption of an English Language Proficiency Assessment to be Administered in 2008-2009

Presenter: Mrs. Shelley Loving-Ryder, Assistant Superintendent, Division of Student Assessment and School Improvement

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Origin:

☒ Topic presented for information only (no board action required)

Board review required by

☐ State or federal law or regulation

☐ Board of Education regulation

☐ Other: _____

☐ Action requested at this meeting ☐ Action requested at future meeting: _____ (date)

Previous Review/Action:

☐ No previous board review/action

☐ Previous review/action

date _____

action _____

Background Information:

Title I, Part A, of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* requires local school divisions to administer an annual assessment for all kindergarten through twelfth-grade limited English proficient (LEP) students. The English language proficiency (ELP) assessment must measure the oral language, reading, and writing skills of all LEP students in a school division. As stipulated in the non-regulatory Title III, Part A, Guidance on Standards, Assessment, and Accountability, if a state decides to allow school divisions to use multiple measures to assess English language proficiency, the state must:

- set technical criteria for the assessments;
- ensure that any assessments used are equivalent to one another in their content, difficulty, and quality;
- review and approve each assessment; and
- ensure that data from all assessments can be aggregated for comparison and reporting purposes, and can be disaggregated by English language proficiency levels and grade levels.

For the 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 school years, the Stanford English Language Proficiency (SELP) test was the state-approved and funded ELP assessment to meet the Title I and Title III requirement for limited English proficient (LEP) students. As a result of feedback from school divisions, beginning in 2005-2006, the Department of Education allowed each school division flexibility in selecting the ELP

assessment it wanted to use. School divisions could use the SELP or another locally developed or selected ELP assessment that was aligned to Virginia's ELP standards and ELP levels; measured the four required skill areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing; and adhered to psychometric guidelines for reliability and validity. For the 2007-2008 school year school divisions again have flexibility in choosing an ELP assessment. School divisions may use an ELP assessment already approved by the Virginia Board of Education or they may submit a locally developed or selected instrument for consideration.

Some school divisions have expressed interest in again having a state-approved ELP assessment that would be used by all school divisions. A state-approved ELP assessment would enable school divisions to have more accurate information about the proficiency levels of students transferring from other Virginia divisions and would ensure the accuracy of statewide aggregate data. As a first step in the possible adoption of a statewide ELP assessment, the Virginia Department of Education conducted two Focus Group Meetings, February 16, 2007, and June 28, 2007, to review several ELP assessments for possible statewide use beginning in 2008-2009. The Focus Groups included Title III Coordinators, ESOL teachers, representatives of the LEP Caucus, and Division Directors of Testing.

Summary of Major Elements:

A report on the focus group's review of selected English language proficiency assessments is provided in Attachment A.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board accept for first review the recommendation of the focus groups convened to review English language proficiency assessments.

Impact on Resources:

N/A

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

N/A

Attachment A

Summary Report Review of English Language Proficiency Assessments Presented to the Virginia Board of Education on September 26, 2007

The Virginia Department of Education conducted two Focus Group Meetings, February 16, 2007, and June 28, 2007, to review several English Language Proficiency (ELP) assessments for possible use as state- approved ELP assessments. The Focus Groups included Title III Coordinators, ESOL teachers, representatives of the LEP Caucus, and Division Directors of Testing.

English Language Proficiency Assessments Review Meeting February 16, 2007

Initially the Focus Group, which was composed of eight school division representatives from Regions 4 and 5, reviewed four ELP assessments:

1. *Access for English Language Learners* (Access)
Affiliation, World-class Instructional Design and Assessments (WIDA)
Consortium
2. *Idea Proficiency Test* (IPT)
Publisher, Ballard & Tighe
3. *English Language Development Assessment* (ELDA)
Affiliation, Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)
4. *Language Assessment Scales* (LAS) Links, Second Edition
Publisher, CTB/McGraw-Hill

A summary of the Focus Group's comments and recommendations is outlined in the chart below.

Summary of ELP Assessments Reviewed February 16, 2007

ELP Assessment (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing)	Grade/ Level Clusters	General Comments	Recommendations*
Access	Clusters K-2 3-5 6-8 9-12	•Excellent integration of content and language •Aligned with national TESOL standards • Format seems manageable for schools •Score reports provide very useful information	8 Recommended

ELP Assessment (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing)	Grade/ Level Clusters	General Comments	Recommendations*
IPT	Grades 2-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Addresses academic/second language in content areas •Does not embed enough content •Does not accurately and fairly assess student proficiency at either end of the spectrum 	4 Recommended 3 Recommended with Reservations 1 Not Recommended
ELDA	Grades K-2 Grades 3-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Not closely tied to content academic language, yet appears to have social “academic” language •Appears to be very time consuming to administer •Does not bridge across grade clusters •Writing prompts are very weak 	0 Recommended 3 Recommended with Reservations 5 Not Recommended
LAS Links, Second Edition	Clusters K-1 2-3 4-5 6-8 9-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Not an impressive assessment for ELP determination in light of linkage to academic language expectations •Do not see enough substance overall or rigor to reflect classroom realities—high school is too easy •Students at LEP level would have much difficulty taking their grade level assessment •Does not bridge across grade cluster 	0 Recommended 0 Recommended with Reservations 8 Not Recommended

* Evaluations submitted by 8 school division participants

English Language Proficiency Assessments Review Meeting June 28, 2007

The second Focus Group, which was composed of eight representatives from Regions 1, 4, and 6 met on June 28, 2007. Participants reviewed and discussed three ELP assessments reviewed by the first group: (1) *Access for English Language Learners* (Access), (2) *Idea Proficiency Test* (IPT), and (3) *English Language Development Assessment* (ELDA).

State representatives from Alaska, North Carolina, Nebraska, South Carolina, Kentucky, and New Jersey, with experience in the administration of one or more of the three ELP assessments also participated in the meeting by conference call. The state representatives shared their experiences and responded to questions from the group.

A summary of the Focus Group’s recommendations in order of preference follows.

**Summary of ELP Assessments Reviewed
June 28, 2007**

ELP Assessment/ Cost	Grade/ Level Clusters	General Comments	Recommendations*
Access -\$23 per student -\$35, 000* for alignment work (*can be waived, if state chose not to do alignment study) -2.5% charge with a maximum for divisions to cover processing fees	Clusters K-2 3-5 6-8 9-12	<u>Strengths</u> • Aligned with content standards; will drive instruction • Language of content is strong • Length of test is appropriate • Ancillary materials are user friendly <u>Weaknesses</u> • May be complicated to identify the appropriate tier for testing the students • Lots of materials	7 Recommended 2 Recommended with Reservations 0 Not Recommended
ELDA -\$18 per student -\$25, 000 Membership fee paid by state -state or divisions may contract individually with vendor to handle operation costs	Grades K-2 Grades 3-12	<u>Strengths</u> • Online testing capability <u>Weaknesses</u> • Lack of content alignment • Very long; lots of materials to handle • Does not assess academic language of content areas • Manuals provide insufficient directions; not enough details	1 Recommended 4 Recommended with Reservations 4 Not Recommended
IPT -\$20.47 per student (Division price based on 20,000 students minimum, if fewer students the state fee will increase) -\$1,192, 380 State fees (includes program management, integration into PEMSolutions, Std Setting)	Grades 2-12	<u>Strengths</u> • Materials are visually attractive and “polished” • Adoption of IPT would be easier because of current use of PEMSolutions <u>Weaknesses</u> • Appears to be testing academic content, but it is really relying on background knowledge and reading skills • Appears to have more “math content” • Lacks necessary rigor for students to progress • Cost is prohibitive • Only two forms; if one used for screening then only one left for testing for progress • Outdated pictures	0 Recommended 1 Recommended with Reservations 8 Not Recommended